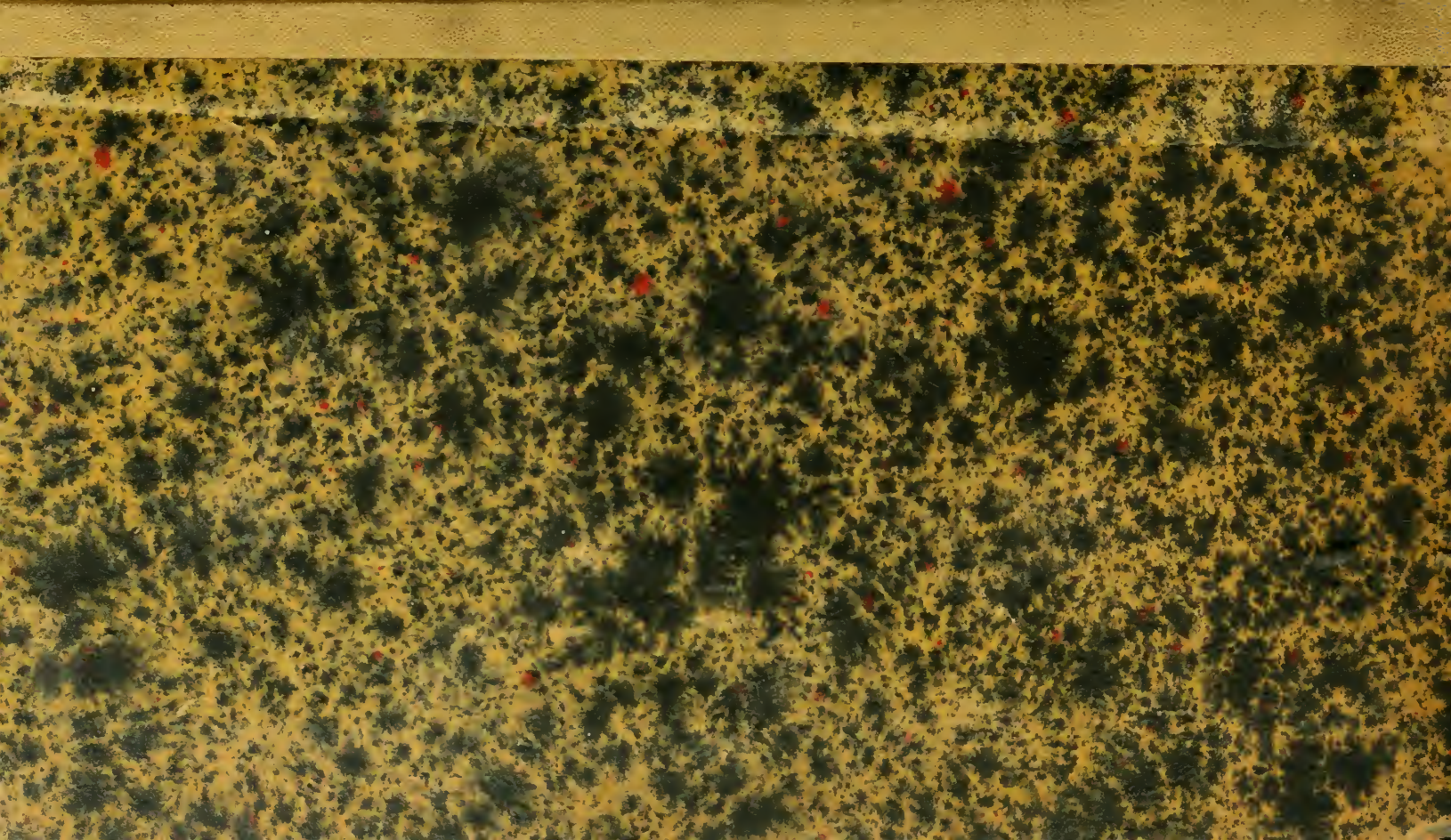

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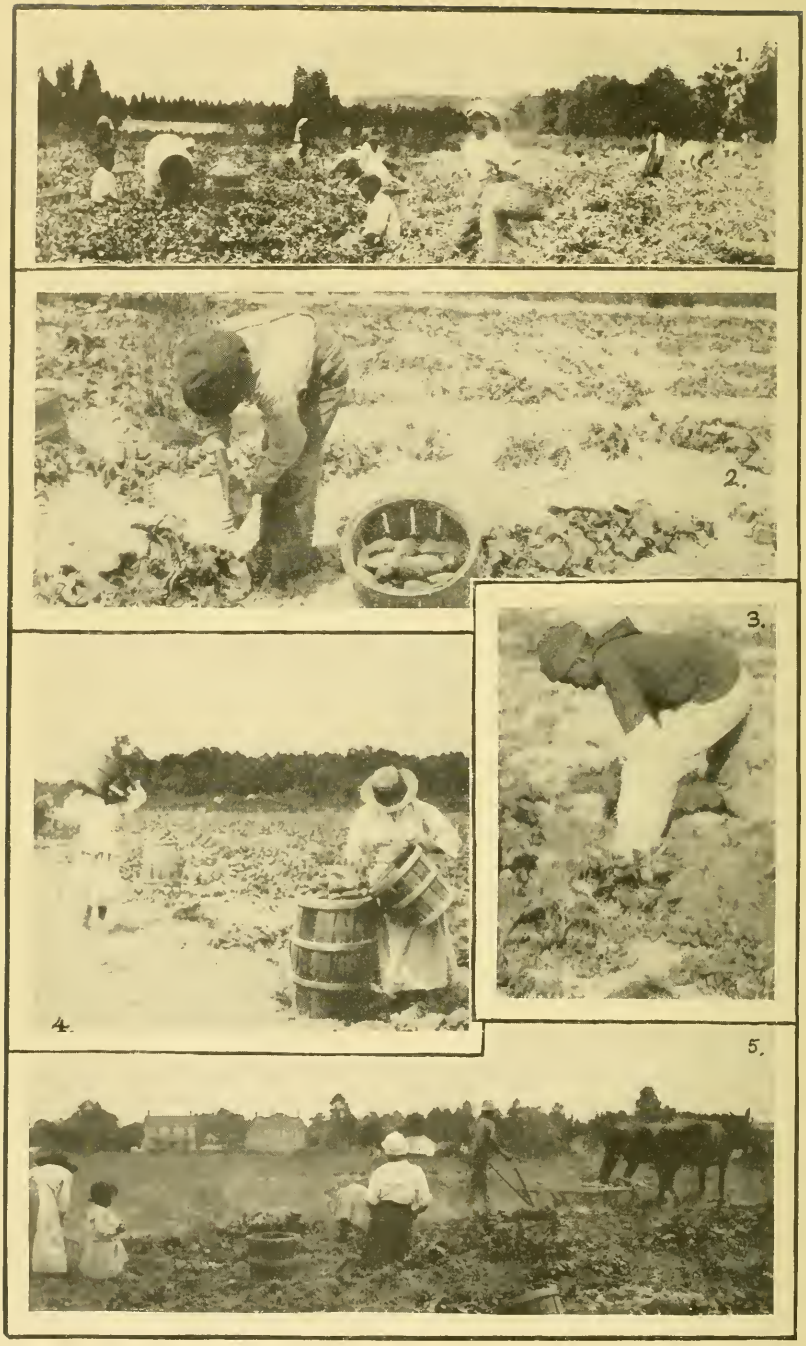
CHILD LABOR AND THE WORK OF MOTHERS ON NORFOLK TRUCK FARMS

Bureau Publication No. 130

WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1924



1. PICKING PEAS. 2. PICKING CUCUMBERS. 3. "SPOONING" SPINACH. 4. CARRYING HAMPERS OF POTATOES. 5. "SCRATCHING" OR "GRABBLING" POTATOES JUST AFTER THEY ARE PLOWED.

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Picking peas—Picking cucumbers—"Spooning" spinach—Carrying hampers of potatoes—"Scratching," or "grabbling," potatoes just after they are plowed ..... Frontispiece.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

U. S. Department of Labor,
Children's Bureau,
Washington, September 10, 1923.

Sir: Submitted herewith is a report entitled "Child Labor and the Work of Mothers on Norfolk Truck Farms," one of a series of studies on rural child labor which the industrial division of the bureau is making.

The investigation was planned and carried on under the general supervision of Ellen Nathalie Matthews, director of the industrial division of the bureau. Ethel M. Springer was responsible for the immediate direction of the field work and for the preliminary organization of the material for the report.

The Children's Bureau desires to express its appreciation of the cooperation given during the course of the investigation by State, county, and local officials, particularly by school principals, teachers, and attendance officers.

Respectfully submitted.

Grace Abbott, *Chief.*

Hon. James J. Davis,
Secretary of Labor

CHILD LABOR AND THE WORK OF MOTHERS ON NORFOLK TRUCK FARMS.[1]

INTRODUCTION.

The so-called Norfolk section of Virginia, comprising the counties of Norfolk, Princess Anne, Nansemond, Isle of Wight, and York, is one of the most intensive truck-farming areas in the United States. Within a comparatively small territory produce is raised for shipment not only to the large cities to the north along the Atlantic coast but also to inland cities as far west as Chicago and St. Louis.

Climate and soil combine to make the Norfolk area ideal for truck farming, and work on the truck farms is practically continuous throughout the year. Local farmers boast that the area produces 40 crops, and the day sheets of one of the largest shipping companies of Norfolk provide columns for 42 varieties of vegetables and small fruits, with additional undesignated columns for other varieties. During the winter the hardier greens—kale, spinach, and collards—are harvested. In January the ground is prepared for early crops, and cabbage and strawberries are set out. In February early potatoes, beans, and radishes are planted. March is the month for planting lettuce and setting out or transplanting sweet-potato slips. Cantaloupes, tomatoes, and eggplants are ready to set out in April, and peas and cucumbers are started about this time. Throughout these early months radishes, lettuce, and cabbages are being gathered, but the "rush season" for harvesting begins in late April or early May with the strawberry crop and the early spring vegetables and continues until melons and sweet potatoes have been gathered in August. Late plantings of many of these crops are made during the spring, and in August and September the fall crops of kale, spinach, and potatoes are started.

The average size of the Norfolk farms (78.4 acres in Norfolk County) is small compared with the general average for the United States (148.2 acres), but a single farm in the Norfolk area may

[1] This is the second in a series of studies of the work of children on truck farms. See Child Labor on Maryland Truck Farms, Children's Bureau Publication No. 123. A study of the work of children on truck and small fruit farms in southern New Jersey is in press.

produce many different crops. For example, one of the farms visited had grown during the year of the study kale, spinach, radishes, strawberries, peas, potatoes, beans, beets, cucumbers, sweet corn, eggplants, tomatoes, melons, sweet potatoes, and cabbage, a series which meant a fairly continuous harvest throughout the year. Other farms cultivated more intensively a smaller number of crops; for example, a farm of 120 acres grew only kale, cabbage, beans, and potatoes. Raising two crops a year of each of these four vegetables means continuous work.

The districts in which the present study of the work of children on truck farms was made were located in Norfolk and Nansemond Counties and were selected after consultation with State and local officials well acquainted with agricultural and educational conditions in the State. Every truck farm in the selected districts was canvassed, and an interview was held with every family living or working on farms in which any child under 16 years of age had done farm work during the year preceding the interview.

The study was made during May, June, and July—undoubtedly the busiest season on the truck farms of the area—and included the period covering the harvesting of strawberries, which ripen usually in May; of beans and peas, which are sent to market in June; and of early potatoes, which are gathered in the latter part of June and in July. It was possible, therefore, to obtain more detailed information regarding children's work on those crops than on any others, but all the workers interviewed were questioned as to their work for the entire year previous to the inquiry. Whether or not the usual number of children were employed on the farms during the year of the study it is not possible to say definitely, but workers and farmers stated that because of the unemployment situation throughout the country more men than usual were available for work on farms and therefore fewer children were employed.

CLASSES OF CHILD WORKERS.

There is a marked difference in the kinds of labor employed on the truck farms of different States, and even on those of different sections of the same State. The workers included in the Children's Bureau study of child labor on the truck farms of southern New Jersey, for example, were nearly all white, chiefly foreign born or the children of foreign-born parents, who had taken up small holdings in the farming districts and become permanent residents or had come from the large cities as seasonal workers. In Maryland, where a similar study was made by the bureau, large numbers of both white and colored children, most of them of native birth and resident on

the farms the year round, work on the truck farms in the Eastern Shore section; while of the child workers in Anne Arundel County about two-thirds were found to be living on the farms or in small neighboring settlements, and one-third were migratory workers from Baltimore, many in each group having foreign-born parents. In the Norfolk area of Virginia farm labor is recruited chiefly from the colored race, and practically all the children working on the farms are colored. Only 17 white children under 16 years of age were reported as working on the truck farms in the area studied, and because the number is small they have not been considered in this report. The study therefore deals exclusively with negro workers. It includes 895 children in 502 families.

A very large proportion of the farm laborers in this section do not live on the farms but come from near-by villages or from the city of Norfolk to work by the day. Of the 895 children included in the study only 191 lived on farms the year round and 64 during the busy season; the majority (640, or 71.5 per cent) came out to the farms to work for the day, returning to their homes in town or rural settlement each night.

FAMILIES OF THE CHILD WORKERS.

The families of the child workers included in this study were those of farm operators (owners or tenants) and regular farm laborers, living on the farms all the year round; temporary employees living on the farms during the busy seasons only; and (by far the largest class) laborers coming to the farms each day from rural settlements or the city of Norfolk. (Table 1.)

Very few farm owners' or tenants' families are represented in this report, for though the proportion of negro farmers in Norfolk County is large (35.5 per cent) most of them operate market gardens rather than truck farms—that is to say, dispose of their produce in local markets instead of shipping it—and so did not come within the scope of the study.

Only 25 of the 502 families included in the study were those of farm operators, and of these 8 were farm owners and 17 were tenant farmers. These men farmed in a small way—of 5 owners reporting as to acreage, 4 operated farms of less than 50 acres, as did all the 13 tenant farmers giving reports as to acreage—and in some cases supplemented by other occupations their income from the farm. Most of them, both owners and tenants, lived in small three or four room unscreened houses, some of them seriously overcrowded, and a few (eight) with no privies or other toilet accommodations. In only 8 of the 25 families could both parents read and write, and only 7 took a newspaper or other periodical.

TABLE 1.—*Work status of families and children interviewed who worked on truck farms.*

Work status of family.	Families with working children under 16.	Children under 16 who worked.
Total	502	895
Farm owners	8	13
Farm tenants	17	38
Farm laborers resident on farms	78	140
Other farm laborers	399	704
Living on farms temporarily	42	64
Living in villages	289	526
Living in city	68	114

Seventy-eight of the families included in the study were those of regular farm laborers living on farms. The farmer employing the laborers had first claim upon the time of the members of their families, though if there was no work to be done on his farm they were free to work elsewhere. Their social status was somewhat below that of the negro farmers of the neighborhood; in an even smaller proportion of these families of resident farm laborers (19 of the 78) were both parents literate, and in proportionately fewer (17 of the 78) was reading matter subscribed for. An even larger proportion than among the farm operators pieced out their incomes by other work than farming; 21 heads of households reported other employment, such as domestic service or work in a factory or on a railroad. They were a stable group: Half of them had lived on the same farm for five years preceding the study, and one-fourth had moved only once during that period. The condition of the houses in which they lived depended on the interest and resources of the farmers hiring them. On some farms rows of small neat cottages had been erected for the laborers; on others old, abandoned buildings were utilized. Their homes were usually three or four room cabins, unscreened, half of them without privies and most of them too small for the large families which they had to accommodate. In 33, or two-fifths, of the homes there were two or more persons per room.

Local farm labor is supplemented during busy seasons by laborers from the city and near-by settlements, though only a few farmers find it necessary to house their laborers during the time they are needed for a special harvest, usually a period of only three or four weeks. Forty-two of the families included in the study had come out to live on the farms during busy seasons. About half of those reporting had been seasonal farm workers for at least four seasons. While in the country they lived in the most primitive way. Most

of them were housed in one-room shacks, sleeping on hay or on wooden crates, cooking over camp fires, and having no toilet accommodations. Only 11 of the 42 families reported having privies, and some of these were surface privies or were built over banks or streams, a source of contamination to soil and water. Frequently several families occupied a single room. One shack, for example, had three rooms, each of which sheltered 25 men, women, and children. So many families lived in this shack that, as one mother said, "You have to take your chance on cooking meals." They had no toilet and only one pump.

Owing to the accessibility of the Norfolk farms to the city and to numerous negro villages, the great bulk of the seasonal labor and, in fact, of all the labor used on the truck farms of this region consists of laborers coming out to the farms to work each day. Some farmers send motor trucks each morning to bring the workers from the city or the little rural settlements where they live; others charter street cars; others merely furnish car fare.

Workers living near the farms usually secure their jobs directly from the farmer—they apply in person or he comes to their houses in search of workers. "The farmer came to our street," and "The farmer sends one or two wagons to the village, and those who want work simply go and climb in," are typical accounts of how near-by workers are recruited. Most city workers are engaged through a row boss or agent with just as little formality. Said one city worker: "The row boss stands on the corner and shouts 'Strawberry hands! Strawberry hands!' and everyone goes who wishes." Sometimes only the children go, sometimes the entire family, including the father; but usually it is the mother who takes the children out to the farms for the day's work.

Of the 502 families included in the study, 399 did not live on the farms or lived there only for a few weeks at busy seasons. In 15 per cent of these families the main source of livelihood was farm work; but in the great majority the father or mother, or whoever was the chief support of the family, had other work. One-fifth were domestic servants; 12 per cent were employed in public service, most of them by the United States Government at the naval base at Lambert Point; 14 per cent were laborers, most of them at the ship or railroad terminals; and 12 per cent were factory hands or mechanics. In a somewhat larger proportion of families (34 per cent) than in any other of the groups of farm workers were both parents literate.

No study of the home conditions was made in the case of the 68 families who lived in the city of Norfolk, but the 289 living at

the time of the study in rural settlements appeared to be housed rather more comfortably on the whole than farm families. The houses were somewhat larger—two-thirds had at least four rooms—and, though one-fourth of the families were crowded so that there were two or more persons per room, congestion was not quite so great as in the little cabins on the farms. Some of the laborers in a small village of about 30 dwellings owned their houses, which were kept in fair condition and were screened and provided with outside privies. Others lived in a larger village of negro families near the naval base at Lambert Point, which had been built by the United States Government for employees at the naval base but later had been turned over to private hands and sold or rented to colored families. The appearance of the plaster cottages in this settlement was neat and attractive, but a close inspection revealed that the village was deteriorating. A drainage system which had been started was left unfinished and open drains surrounded the cottages. Streets were unpaved and there were no sidewalks. Electric facilities which had been installed were of no use because the village was not supplied with current.

On the whole the negro families whose women and children do most of the work on the truck farms in the Norfolk area are at a low economic and social level. In only two-thirds of the households included in the study was the father supporting the family; in more than one-fifth the mother was the chief breadwinner, and in nearly one-fifth the main support was derived from domestic service, chiefly that of mothers or older daughters. About three-tenths of those responsible for the support of their families who reported on unemployment and worked regularly had been out of work during the year preceding the Children's Bureau inquiry—8.9 per cent of those engaged only in farming, 34.9 per cent of those who did not work on farms at all, and 37.5 per cent of those who had worked at some other occupation in addition to farming. Eighteen per cent had been unemployed for at least eight weeks during the year. In addition 10 per cent of all the chief breadwinners worked only irregularly. In two-thirds of the families one or the other parent could not read and write, and in 29 per cent both were illiterate. Most of them lived in uncomfortable, insanitary quarters, and a large proportion under the most wretched conditions—24 per cent of the houses of those living outside Norfolk had no toilet accommodations, 85 per cent were unscreened, and 20 per cent were congested so that there were at least four persons per sleeping room.

TABLE 2.—*Occupation of chief breadwinner in families with children under 16 years of age who worked on truck farms, by duration of his unemployment during year preceding study.*

Occupation of chief breadwinner.	Families in which the chief breadwinner was unemployed for specified period.							
	Total.	None.	Less than 4 weeks.	4 weeks, less than 8.	8 weeks, less than 16.	16 weeks and over.	Irregular.	Not reported.
Total	[1] 502	278	25	15	35	37	48	58
Agricultural	[2] 252	142	9	4	9	17	37	34
Nonagricultural	244	136	16	11	26	20	11	24
Domestic and personal service	37	25	3	1	1	2	2	3
Manufacturing and mechanical	37	15	3	3	5	5	2	4
Trade	19	13	1	1	1	3	.....	.....
Transportation	48	23	5	3	5	4	1	7
Public service	43	31	.....	3	4	3	1	1
All other	16	11	.....	.....	2	.....	1	2
More than one occupation	42	17	4	.....	8	3	4	6
Not reported	2	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1

[1] Includes three families having no chief breadwinner and three in which the information relative to chief breadwinner was not reported.
[2] Includes 112 having other occupation in addition to farming.

FARM WORK DONE BY CHILDREN.

Most of the children who work on truck farms in the Norfolk section of Virginia are employed only for harvesting the various crops—chiefly strawberries, beans, and potatoes—though the comparatively few whose homes are on farms do a great variety of jobs. The majority of the 895 children included in the study because they had worked at least 12 days had worked on not more than three crops and at not more than three kinds of work; but about one-fifth of the children (all living on or near farms except four, who were seasonal workers) had worked on at least six truck crops, and 14 per cent (also chiefly those living on or near farms) had done six or more different kinds of work. (Table 4.) Some were hired, along with the adult members of their families, as general workers, paid by the day and employed at any work or on any crop raised on the farm. One of the children included in the study, for example, a boy 12 years of age who had worked irregularly throughout the year, missing 103 days of school, reported work on spinach, kale, radishes, strawberries, peas, beans, cucumbers, melons, potatoes, and cabbages, besides such general work by the day as plowing and cultivating. A girl of 15 who had worked for more than four months during the year had helped with work on kale, spinach, radishes, lettuce, carrots, beets, beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, figs, and potatoes.

Although girls are rarely employed in this section for general farm work, such as plowing, harrowing, and cultivating, the number of girls and boys working on the farms is about the same—426 of the workers included in the study were boys and 469, girls. The majority of the children at work are under 14 years of age. Only one-

fifth of those included in the study were 14 or 15, and more than one-fourth of the children (235) were under 10. Many children begin working on the farms as soon as they can be trusted to do the simplest tasks. Of 652 children in the study who were at least 10 years of age, 311 (48 per cent) had begun field work before the age of 10. For children living on farms, including both those of farm operators and those of farm laborers, this proportion was 56 per cent.

TABLE 3.—*Ages of children who worked on truck farms, by sex of child.*

Age	Working children under 16 years of age.					
	Total.		Boys.		Girls.	
	Number.	Per cent distribution.	Number.	Per cent distribution.	Number.	Per cent distribution
Total	895	100.0	426	100.0	469	100.0
4 years, under 5	1	.1	.....	.....	1	.2
5 years, under 6	8	.9	3	.7	5	1.1
6 years, under 7	23	2.6	18	4.2	5	1.1
7 years, under 8	50	5.6	27	6.3	23	4.9
8 years, under 9	76	8.5	39	9.2	37	7.9
9 years, under 10	77	8.6	36	8.5	41	8.7
10 years, under 11	114	12.7	54	12.7	60	12.8
11 years, under 12	105	11.7	56	13.1	49	10.4
12 years, under 13	111	12.4	59	13.8	52	11.1
13 years, under 14	139	15.5	55	12.9	84	17.9
14 years, under 15	112	12.5	50	11.7	62	13.2
15 years, under 16	71	7.9	22	5.2	49	10.4
Not reported	8	.9	7	1.6	1	.2

TABLE 4.—*Ages of children doing each specified kind of field work.*

Kind of field work.	Children under 16 years of age doing each specified kind of field work.											
	Total.	Under 8 years.		8 years, under 10.		10 years, under 12.		12 years, under 14.		14 years, under 16.		Age not reported.	
		Number.	Per cent [1]	Number.	Per cent.[1]	Number.	Per cent.[1]	Number.	Per cent.[1]	Number.	Per cent.[1]	Number.	Per cent.[1]
Total	895	82	9.2	153	17.1	219	24.5	250	27.9	183	20.4	8	0.9
General:													
Plowing	75	.....	.....	1	1.3	13	17.3	32	42.7	27	36.0	2	2.7
Harrowing	55	.....	.....	1	1.8	10	18.2	25	45.5	17	30.9	2	3.6
Cultivating	39	.....	.....	2	.....	8	.....	13	.....	14	.....	2	.....
Weeding	46	1	.....	6	.....	12	.....	16	.....	9	.....	2	.....
Hoeing	105	.....	.....	7	6.7	19	18.1	32	30.5	45	42.9	2	1.9
Thinning	42	2	.....	4	.....	8	.....	16	.....	12	.....	.....	.....
Spooning kale or spinach	133	2	1.5	14	10.5	34	25.6	47	35.3	34	25.6	2	1.5
Planting	65	.....	.....	5	7.7	10	15.4	22	33.8	28	43.1	.....	.....
Transplanting	89	1	1.1	4	4.5	17	19.1	24	27.0	41	46.1	2	2.2
Harvesting:													
Strawberries	761	67	8.8	123	16.2	191	25.1	222	29.2	155	20.4	3	.4
Beans	555	52	9.2	82	14.5	138	24.4	167	29.6	119	21.1	7	1.2
Peas	236	18	7.6	43	18.2	63	26.7	67	28.4	45	19.1	.....	.....
Cucumbers	56	1	1.8	8	14.3	10	17.9	17	30.4	18	32.1	2	3.6
Tomatoes	30	.....	.....	1	.....	10	.....	7	.....	12	.....	.....	.....
Melons	10	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	6	.....	3	.....	.....	.....
Kale or spinach	184	6	3.3	25	13.6	38	20.7	65	35.3	48	26.1	2	1.1
Radishes	217	9	4.1	26	12.0	61	28.1	70	32.3	49	22.6	2	.9
Beets	91	3	3.3	11	12.1	26	28.6	28	30.8	23	25.3	.....	.....
Potatoes [2]	407	27	6.6	64	15.7	104	25.6	132	32.4	77	18.9	3	.7
Sweet potatoes [2]	33	.....	.....	4	.....	11	.....	8	.....	8	.....	2	.....

[1] Per cent not shown where base is less than 50.

[2] Gathering only.

KINDS OF WORK.

Preparation of the soil.

Comparatively few children (Table 4), chiefly those whose homes were on farms, did any work in connection with the preparation of the soil for planting, such as plowing, disking, harrowing, or dragging. With the exception of one 14-year-old girl who had plowed and another who had harrowed, the children who reported such work were all boys. One child under 10 years of age reported plowing and another harrowing and one-fifth of those doing this work were under 12, but more than one-third were 14 or 15 years of age. Plowing and harrowing and similar work are customarily done by the day, the hours comprising a day's work ranging from 10 to 13. A 12-year-old boy whose working day was typical for children doing such work reported that on the day previous to his interview with the bureau agent he had plowed for 10 hours, from 7 in the morning until noon and from 1 o'clock until 6. This boy had not attended school during the year of the study but had worked regularly throughout the year at any kind of farm work his employer required.

Planting and transplanting.

All the children who reported planting or transplanting, like those reporting the general work of preparing the soil, lived on or near farms and constituted but a small proportion of the child workers included in the study. Planting was reported by 65 children, about one-fourth of whom were under 12 years of age. (Table 4.) Several had operated planting machines.

Transplanting is necessary in the case of a number of truck crops; for example, cabbages, lettuce, sweet potatoes, cantaloupes, eggplants, and tomatoes. Eighty-nine children, most of whom were 12 years of age or over (Table 4), reported drawing slips or young plants from seed beds, dropping them at regular intervals in new beds, or setting them out. Sometimes one individual does the entire work of transplanting; at other times the work is divided. Some families reported that in transplanting cabbages, for example, children dropped the plants while adults did the setting. When in the culture of strawberries selected plants from old vines are set out to form new beds children sometimes dig up the old plants, adults doing the dropping and setting.

On large farms the work of dropping and setting may be done by machine, but the use of machinery was not found to any extent on the Norfolk farms visited.

Cultivation of crops.

The care of truck crops includes freeing the plants from weeds or other obstructions, such as hardened soil, and trimming down or

thinning out the plants themselves in order to insure the fullest growth to fruit or vegetable. The various forms of the work may be done with the fingers, with light hand tools, or with hand or horse cultivators. In describing what they do women and children use not only the familiar terms, "weeding," "hoeing," and "thinning," but a number of colloquial terms such as "grassing" for weeding, "chopping" for hoeing, and for forms of thinning "scraping," "shaving," or "spooning," so called because in the care of spinach and kale the superfluous plants, together with grass and weeds, are chopped out with a large-sized kitchen spoon having one sharpened edge. All this work, unless done with a long-handled hoe or cultivator, involves stooping over the plants or working on hands and knees.

More children do work in connection with the cultivation of crops than do plowing or planting. (Table 4.) Operating a cultivator was reported by 39 children, all living on or near farms. With the exception of one 14-year-old girl all were boys, and most of them were 12 years of age or older. Hoeing was reported by 105 children, 45 boys and 60 girls, including the same proportion (25 per cent) under 12 years of age as reported using a cultivator. Forty-six children, 41 per cent of whom were under 12, had weeded. A few children had worked in the potato fields, ridding plants of insects—"spraying" or "bugging," they called it.

Harvesting.

It is in harvesting that the great majority of the children are employed, especially those who go out to the farms from little rural settlements or from Norfolk. The harvesting of strawberries,[2] beans, potatoes, and peas probably requires the greatest numbers of extra hands. Strawberries, beans, and peas mature rapidly, and when the time for picking arrives the fields are overrun with workers.

Strawberries are picked into quart baskets, beans and peas ordinarily into 5-peck hampers. When the receptacles are full the children carry them to the end of the row, where credit for them is given by the row boss in the form of a check or ticket. Seven hundred and sixty-one children in the study reported that they had picked strawberries during the current season, 565 that they had picked beans, and 236 that they had picked peas. In each of these groups about one-fourth of the children were under 10 years of age.

Four hundred and seven children, of whom 22.4 per cent were under 10 years of age, reported gathering white potatoes; and 33

[2] In 1919 Norfolk County had 495 acres in strawberries, 736 in beans, and 184 in peas. Probably more children pick strawberries, however, than harvest any other crop, owing to the fact that it is the most perishable of the crops grown; but it should be borne in mind in comparing the proportions of children reported at work on various crops that the study was made at the height of the strawberry season and possibly some of the children interviewed regarding their year's work were not those who worked on other crops.

children reported gathering sweet potatoes.[3] (Table 4.) Many workers thought gathering potatoes the hardest work that they did. The work consists of several operations, sometimes divided among several workers. The potatoes are first loosened from the earth with a hoe, a light plow, or a potato digger. They are then lifted out of the soil by hand—"scratched," "graveled," or "grabbled" out, according to the idioms of the colored workers—and sorted as they are tossed into piles. Small "carries" may be taken to the end of the row and there dumped into barrels, but barreling may be done in the row, and many workers complained of the heavy barrels which they had to "tote." (See frontispiece.) Sometimes women and children left the barrels for the men to move, but others lifted them themselves. Workers reported that even the small hampers were heavy.

Many children (217 of those included in the study) pulled and bunched radishes, and a number (91 of the children interviewed) pulled and bunched beets. Radishes are sometimes washed before they are bunched and packed for shipping, and children are set to doing this work, which means keeping the hands in cold water for long stretches of time.

Cutting kale and spinach was reported by 184 children. (Table 4.) This work is done with a sharp knife and involves the danger of cutting hands or other parts of the body, as well as the fatigue of constant stooping or crawling and exposure to cold and dampness, for kale and spinach are cut throughout the winter. "It's just plain freezing," said one mother who cut kale in January. "Your hands and feet get so cold you can hardly move them."

A few children (30) had picked tomatoes, and a few more (56) had picked cucumbers. These vegetables are picked from the vines and placed in crates, although occasionally cucumbers are gathered by the barrel. (See frontispiece.) Tomatoes are sometimes laid in hay or wrapped in paper. A five-eighths-bushel basket of tomatoes, the size commonly used, weighs, when full, approximately 40 pounds, and "toting," or carrying, the hampers and crates was reported to be heavy work.

Only 10 children reported that they had picked melons during the season covered by the inquiry. Cantaloupes and other melons are pulled from the vines in much the same way as cucumbers and tomatoes, but the work is more fatiguing because the fruit is heavier. Watermelons are "toted" one by one to the pile or wagon at the end of the row.

[3] While the white-potato acreage in Norfolk County is 5 times as large as that devoted to the raising of sweet potatoes, there is some possibility that these figures do not represent precisely the relative proportions of children engaged in gathering potatoes and sweet potatoes, respectively, for the reason that the survey was completed before the harvesting of sweet potatoes had begun, and workers not engaged on crops upon which work was being done at the time of the bureau inquiry would not have been included.

Other work.

A few children had done work on parsley, which is "chopped" in April; carrots, which are pulled and bunched in April and May; lettuce and cabbage, which are cut in the spring and again in the fall; cauliflower, gathered chiefly in May; onions, gathered in July; figs, gathered from August to December; and collards and turnip tops. Besides work on truck crops children reported working on corn, cotton, tobacco, and peanuts. Most of these children lived in Nansemond County, which has a considerable acreage in cotton and peanuts.

Many of the rural children reported work during the year other than that in the fields; 138, most of whom were boys, had had miscellaneous daily chores to do, and 190 other children had cared for chickens.

DURATION OF FIELD WORK.

Most of the children working on the truck farms are employed only a few weeks, but some work regularly for several months and a few throughout the year. (Table 5.)

More than two-fifths of the children included in the study who reported the duration of their work had done field work regularly for less than one month, or 26 days, during the year. On the other hand, 67 (8.6 per cent) had worked regularly (that is, practically every day) for four months or more, including 14 children who had worked the entire year. In addition, 56 (7.2 per cent) had worked irregularly a total of four months or more, including 18 who had done some work in the fields during every month of the year. Some of the children who had worked regularly during the entire year were as young as 12 years, while those who had worked irregularly for 12 months ranged in age from 8 to 15 years. The following are typical examples of children working regularly throughout the year:

A 13-year-old boy was employed as a laborer at $1.50 for a 10-hour day. On the day previous to the interview he had been loading cabbages into a cart, hauling them away from the field, packing them in crates, and taking the packed crates to a boat landing at the edge of the field.

Another boy 12 years of age, not attending school, alternated with his mother in going to the fields, staying at home to care for two younger children when his mother worked. On the day for which information was secured he had been in a strawberry field for six hours—from 8 a. m. till 2 p. m.—picking and capping [4] berries. This boy had plowed, harrowed, and cared for every crop raised on his employer's farm, including kale, spinach, strawberries, beans, cucumbers, potatoes, and watermelons.

[4] "Capping" means removing the hulls or caps from berries which are to be sent directly to a cannery or preserving establishment.

TABLE 5.—*Duration of field work performed by children on truck farms, by age of child.*

Age.	Children under 16 years of age who did field work for specified period.												
	Total.	Regular workers.							Irregular workers.					Not reported.
		Total.	Less than 1 mo.	1 mo., less than 2.	2 mos., less than 4.	4 mos., less than 8.	8 mos., less than 12.	12 mos.	Total.	Less than 4 mos.	4 mos., less than 8.	8 mos., less than 12.	12 mos.	
Total	895	654	337	151	99	39	14	14	124	68	29	9	18	117
Under 6 years	9	8	4	4	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	1	.....	.....	.....
6 years, under 8	73	60	43	13	4	.....	.....	.....	7	6	1	.....	.....	6
8 years, under 10	153	124	77	24	14	7	2	.....	17	12	1	2	2	12
10 years, under 12	219	166	89	38	26	10	3	.....	25	13	7	1	4	28
12 years, under 14	250	166	69	51	26	9	4	7	45	24	12	2	7	39
14 years, under 16	184	123	50	20	29	12	5	7	29	13	7	4	5	32
Not reported	7	7	5	1	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

HOURS OF WORK.

The families were questioned in regard to the working hours of the children on the last working day preceding the bureau agent's interview on which the customary amount of field work had been done. As the interviews were held in May, June, and July, the hours reported by most of the children were for picking strawberries or beans or gathering potatoes, though some reported work on other crops on their last working day, and some had worked by the day as regular farm laborers. The hours for picking strawberries are somewhat fewer than the average for other kinds of work, because strawberries must be shipped on the day they are picked and the pickers stop work as soon as it is too late to send the berries out on that day's shipment. Children employed regularly as farm laborers reported the longest hours of work. Girls worked about as long hours as boys.

About two-fifths (41.1 per cent) of the children had had a working day of less than six hours, but the great majority of this group had worked four or more hours. Twenty-seven and four-tenths per cent had worked between six and eight hours. On the other hand, 156 children, or one-sixth of the total number, reported that they had spent more than 8 hours in the fields on their last working day, and 76 had worked 10 to 14 hours. (Table 6.) Fifteen children under 10 and 57 under 12 years of age had worked more than eight hours.

TABLE 6.—*Hours of field work performed on typical day*[1] *by children on truck farms, by age of child.*

Age.	Children under 16 years of age who worked specified field hours.								
	Total.	Less than 4 hours.	4 hours, less than 6.	6 hours, less than 8.	8 hours.	Over 8 hours, less than 10.	10 hours, less than 12.	12 hours and over.	Not reported.
Total	895	96	272	245	82	80	63	13	44
Under 6 years	9	1	3	3	2	.....	.....	.....	.....
6 years, under 8	73	11	32	16	7	3	1	.....	3
8 years, under 10	153	20	65	36	12	7	4	.....	9
10 years, under 12	219	30	69	53	18	28	10	4	7
12 years, under 14	250	20	65	82	22	23	21	5	12
14 years, under 16	183	14	37	54	18	18	25	4	13
Not reported	8	.....	1	1	3	1	2	.....	.....

[1] On day preceding the visit of agent or, if that day was not typical of the season, work on next preceding typical day.

Many of the children (228 boys and 308 girls) reported work in addition to that in the fields. Girls had generally spent some time in housework, the boys whose homes were in rural districts had had chores to do, and city and village boys had sold papers or caddied. Although only 8.5 per cent of the children reported working 10 or more hours in the field on their last working day, 15.6 per cent reported that the length of their working day had been 10 or more hours when work other than field work was included. Compared with the 41.1 per cent reporting less than six hours of field work is the 25.4 per cent reporting less than six hours as the length of the entire working day.

Most of the children did not begin their field work very early in the morning. Three children had begun before 5 a. m.; 36 others, including 10 children under 10 years of age, had begun work between 5 and 6 a. m. The large majority, however, had not begun before 7 o'clock, and a considerable number (377, or 42 per cent) not until 8 o'clock or later. However, the workers who came to the farms from Norfolk had to rise early, for the farmers made a practice of having the truck, special street car, or other conveyance start from town by 6 a. m.

EARNINGS.

General farm work, such as plowing, harrowing, and planting, and some of the work of caring for the crops, such as hoeing potatoes or weeding strawberries, was ordinarily paid for by the day. Children doing such work received from 50 cents to $1.75 and in no case reported fewer than 10 hours of work. More children did piecework, however, than daywork. The price paid for piecework varied with the crop. The cultivation of crops, though sometimes paid for by the day or hour, was often paid for by the row, or by a definite number of feet or yards, usually 100 yards, in a row. For example, one 12-

year-old boy reported "chopping" beans—that is, trimming the plants with a hoe—at the rate of 8 cents a row. Two girls, 8 and 12 years of age, who reported "fingling" (a local term for weeding) cucumbers were together paid 25 cents for three rows. For thinning beets, sweet potatoes, and other crops also, workers were paid by the row. In the case of kale or spinach, which are planted in triple rows, a "row" usually meant 100 yards of a three-row bed.

For cutting potato "eyes" or sprouts, the children received from 12½ to 25 cents a barrel. Setting out cabbage, lettuce, strawberry plants, and tomato plants was paid for by the row, the price varying somewhat with the age of the child who did the work. One girl of 12 set out cabbage plants at the rate of 10 cents for 100 yards, and a 15-year-old girl doing the same work reported that she had received from 15 to 25 cents.

Harvesters were paid by the number of containers which they filled. Checks or tickets, given to the workers as they brought their baskets to the row boss, were cashed by the farmer or his manager on Saturday at the end of the day's work. Strawberries brought 2 cents a quart box, except when the field had been previously picked or for other reasons the yield was poor, and then the rates varied from 3 to 5 cents a quart. Workers reported from 20 to 40 cents a hamper for beans and from 25 to 40 cents for peas, the 5-peck hamper being the size in common use. The rates reported for gathering potatoes ranged from 12 to 20 cents a barrel.

The condition of the crop was a determining factor in the amount which a worker could earn. When the fruit or vegetables were abundant, gathering was a fairly speedy process; when the yield was poor, the work was slow. To compensate somewhat for the difficulties of working on a poor crop farmers ordinarily paid a higher rate; for example, the work done after the first picking, known as "scrapping," was usually paid for at a higher rate to make up for the longer time required to fill the baskets. High rates were, therefore, not always an indication of higher earnings. It was found, for instance, that the hourly earnings of bean pickers receiving 30 cents a hamper ranged higher than those of pickers receiving 35 cents a hamper.

Data on the children's earnings were secured for the last working day preceding the bureau agent's interview with the family. More than half of the 452 children reporting their earnings had received for their work less than 10 cents an hour.[5] The largest amount per hour earned by any child was 50 cents, received by a 15-year-old girl gathering potatoes. The ordinary wage for an adult male laborer on the Norfolk truck farms at the time of the study was $2.50 for a day

[5] Inasmuch as some of the children were paid by the hour and others at piece rates, and the number of hours worked varied widely, for purposes of comparison earnings have been computed for all children on an hourly basis.

of 10 hours or more and for a woman laborer $1.50, or 25 and 15 cents an hour, respectively. Seventy-one and seven-tenths per cent of the children earned less than 15 cents an hour, and 95.8 per cent earned less than 25 cents. (Table 7.) Workers earned less picking strawberries than doing any other kind of work.

TABLE 7.—*Hourly earnings of children who worked on truck farms, by age of child.*

Age.	Children under 16 years of age reporting specified hourly earnings.								
	Total.	Less than 5 cents.	5 cents, less than 10.	10 cents, less than 15.	15 cents, less than 20.	20 cents, less than 25.	25 cents, less than 30.	30 cents, less than 40.	40 cents and over.
Total	[1] 452	77	150	97	71	38	9	7	3
Under 8 years	32	16	11	4	1	.....	.....	.....	.....
8 years, under 9	41	19	13	4	4	1	.....	.....	.....
9 years, under 10	36	16	12	1	5	2	.....	.....	.....
10 years, under 11	62	10	25	15	8	2	1	1	.....
11 years, under 12	60	4	23	10	15	6	2	.....	.....
12 years, under 13	45	5	18	13	5	4	.....	.....	.....
13 years, under 14	74	4	26	20	11	9	2	2	.....
14 years, under 15	60	3	14	21	10	7	3	2	.....
15 years, under 16	42	.....	8	9	12	7	1	2	3

[1] Excludes 443 children for whom hourly earnings were not reported.

Table 8 shows the daily earnings of the children in relation to the number of hours they had worked. Very few of the youngest workers could give an account of their earnings even for one day, for many of them emptied their berries or vegetables into their mothers' containers and received no pay checks or tickets of their own. Many of the mothers regarded the work of these young children as more of a hindrance than a help and brought them to the fields chiefly because it was the easiest way to take care of them. (See frontispiece.) Of the 32 children under 8 reporting (the majority had been in the fields at least five hours), none had earned as much as 75 cents on the day for which information was obtained, and 29 of the 32 had earned less than 50 cents. Even of the 318 children 8 to 13 years of age, who formed the great bulk of the children working on the farms, only a minority had earned as much as 75 cents, though most of them had worked five or more hours. Of 29 of these children who had worked more than eight hours, 13 had received less than 75 cents and all except 1 less than $1.25 for their day's work.

Fourteen and fifteen year old children earned somewhat larger amounts than did younger ones. Their hours of work were longer, as a rule; most of them had worked six hours or more on their last working day, and a larger proportion than among the younger children had worked over eight hours. Hence, the majority had earned at least 75 cents; and 15 children (15 per cent of the total number of those 14 or 15 years of age) had earned $1.25 or more.

TABLE 8.—*Daily earnings of children who worked on truck farms, by hours of field work on typical day[1] and by age of child.*

Hours of field work on typical day,[1] and age of child.	Children under 16 years of age reporting specified daily earnings.						
	Total.	Less than 25 cents.	25 cents, less than 50.	50 cents, less than 75.	75 cents, less than $1.	$1, less than $1.25.	$1.25 and over.
Total	[2] 452	72	121	113	68	51	27
Under 8 years	32	11	18	3	.....	.....	.....
Less than 4 hours	5	2	3	.....	.....	.....	.....
4 hours, less than 5	8	5	2	1	.....	.....	.....
5 hours, less than 6	8	2	4	2	.....	.....	.....
6 hours, less than 7	7	2	5	.....	.....	.....	.....
7 hours, less than 8	2	.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....
Over 8 hours	2	.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....
8 years, under 14	318	59	90	78	48	31	12
Less than 4 hours	45	22	11	9	3	.....	.....
4 hours, less than 5	67	17	24	20	5	1	.....
5 hours, less than 6	55	9	15	14	10	3	4
6 hours, less than 7	55	5	15	10	14	11	.....
7 hours, less than 8	42	3	14	12	6	4	3
8 hours	25	3	8	3	3	4	4
Over 8 hours	29	.....	3	10	7	8	1
14 years, under 16	102	2	13	32	20	20	15
Less than 4 hours	10	.....	3	5	1	1	.....
4 hours, less than 5	21	1	5	9	3	3	.....
5 hours, less than 6	9	1	1	4	1	2	.....
6 hours, less than 7	21	.....	2	7	4	5	3
7 hours, less than 8	20	.....	2	4	5	3	6
8 hours	9	.....	.....	.....	3	4	2
Over 8 hours	12	.....	.....	3	3	2	4

[1] Hours worked on day preceding visit of agent, or if that day was not typical of the season, on the next preceding typical day.
[2] Excludes 443 children for whom earnings were not reported.

The earnings, especially of the younger children, seem a meager return for the hours of labor, the physical strain of constant stooping, the exposure to heat and dampness, and for many the loss of time in school, that the work entailed. The State aims through its child labor law to prevent such a sacrifice of the children's welfare in most occupations. But under the State child labor law as amended in 1922,[6] as well as the one in effect at the time of the study (1921),[7] no restriction whatever was placed upon the work of children on farms except such restrictions as were imposed by the compulsory school attendance law.[8] Four-fifths of the children reported as doing farm work in the districts where the study was made were under 14 years of age, the minimum for occupations covered by the child labor law; one-half the farm-working children were under 12.

In most of the families the children's earnings, small as they were, probably added appreciably to the income, and in some they may have been considered actually necessary for support. The State

[6] Virginia Session Laws of 1920, chs. 390 and 507.
[7] Virginia Session Laws of 1918, ch. 204.
[8] See p. 19.

mothers' pension act [9] provides the possibility of aid for fatherless families, though up to the present time little has been done under the act on account of the failure of counties or cities to appropriate the necessary funds. Under its provisions a widowed, deserted, or divorced mother of a child or children under 16 years of age, or a mother whose husband is physically or mentally incapacitated and who would otherwise be obliged to work regularly away from home, may receive such aid as is necessary to save the children from neglect and to furnish suitable education. As amended in 1922, the law provides for reimbursement by the State of one-third of the amount expended by any county for mothers' pensions, a provision which may be expected to stimulate local action. Up to the present time no State appropriations for the purpose appear to have been made.

SCHOOLING OF CHILDREN WORKING ON THE FARMS.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

Seven hundred and seventy-two of the children were reported as having attended school during the school year preceding the study. School-attendance records were obtained from the schools for 605 of these children. (Table 9.) Twenty-seven per cent had attended less than half and only 53.4 per cent had attended as much as 70 per cent of the school term. These records compare unfavorably with those of other colored child workers. In the peninsula counties of Maryland, for example, 13 per cent of the negro school children included in the Children's Bureau study [10] had attended less than half and two-thirds had attended 70 per cent or more of the term.

TABLE 9.—*School attendance, during year preceding study, of children who worked on truck farms.*

Days of school attendance.	Working children between 6 and 16 years of age attending school specified per cent of school term.								
	Total.	25 per cent.	25 per cent, less than 50.	50 per cent, less than 60.	60 per cent, less than 70.	70 per cent, less than 80.	80 per cent, less than 90.	90 per cent, less than 100.	100 per cent.
Total	[a] 606	53	113	46	70	61	106	154	3
Under 20 days	20	20	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
20 days, under 40	39	33	6	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
40 days, under 60	70	.....	70	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
60 days, under 80	55	.....	33	20	2	.....	.....	.....	.....
80 days, under 100	66	.....	4	22	38	1	1	.....	.....
100 days, under 120	72	.....	.....	4	26	40	2	.....	.....
120 days, under 140	162	.....	.....	.....	4	13	87	58	.....
140 days, under 160	106	.....	.....	.....	.....	7	11	85	3
160 days and over	16	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	5	11	.....

[a] Excludes 114 children between 6 and 16 years of age who did not attend school and 166 for whom no school records were obtained.

[9] Virginia Session Laws of 1922, ch. 488.

[10] Child Labor on Maryland Truck Farms. U. S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 123, p. 49. Washington, 1923.

State requirements in regard to school attendance were very low in Virginia at the time of the study. The State compulsory school attendance law provided only that all children between 8 and 12 years of age (with certain exemptions) should attend school for at least 16 weeks during the year.[11] Despite this exceedingly low standard 100 children, or 26.9 per cent of those between 8 and 12 years of age included in the study, had not attended school during the year preceding the inquiry for even so much as 16 weeks, and of these, 26 had not attended school at all during the year.

Since the study was made the State compulsory school attendance law has been amended.[12] The compulsory school attendance age has been raised to 14 years, and the provisions of the law relating to enforcement have been considerably strengthened. Any city or county, however, may by vote of the school board, the "governing body of the town or city concurring," exempt itself from all the provisions of the law. It is interesting to note that the percentage of negro illiteracy in the State, as reported by the census of 1920, was 23.5.[13] "In general," states the United States Bureau of the Census, "the illiterate population as shown by the census reports should be understood as representing only those persons who have had no schooling whatever." [14]

CAUSES OF ABSENCE.

Farm work was the chief cause of absence, according to statements made by the children's parents. (Table 10.) A few children had stayed out of school because of indifference, because the schools were crowded, or because they could not afford to buy schoolbooks or suitable clothing. One family in which there were six children never had enough clothes for all the children to go to school on the same day. About one-fourth of the children for whom information was secured had lost time because of bad weather or bad roads, but absence for this reason was usually of less than 10 days' duration. While the proportion of those reporting absence on account of illness was 47.9 per cent as compared with 36.7 per cent for absence on account of farm work, the total amount of absence due to illness was considerably less than that due to farm work. Thus, 19 per cent had missed 20 days or more on account of farm work, but only 9 per cent had missed the same amount of schooling on account of illness.

[11] Virginia Session Laws of 1918, sec. 138, ch. 412.
[12] Virginia Session Laws of 1922, ch. 381.
[13] Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Vol. III, Population, p. 1058.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 10

TABLE 10.—*Duration of absence from school for each specified cause, during school year preceding study, of working children attending school.*

Duration o fabsence.	Working children between 6 and 16 years of age for whom reports were obtained as to absence from school.			
	From all causes.	On account of farm work.	On account of illness.	On account of bad weather and bad roads.
Total	606	606	606	606
No absence[1]	3	310	236	334
Absence: Total	603	180	217	106
Under 10 days	80	46	120	92
10 days, under 20	107	41	54	14
20 days, under 30	69	21	18	.....
30 days, under 40	32	18	7	.....
40 days, under 60	105	27	4	.....
60 days, under 80	66	13	5	.....
80 days, under 100	66	8	.....	.....
100 days and over	78	6	9	.....
Not reported	.....	116	153	166

[1] Excludes 114 children of these ages who did not attend school and 166 for whom no school records were obtained.

RETARDATION.

The extent of retardation among the children included in the study was greater than that among any other group of rural child workers studied by the Children's Bureau. The majority (55 per cent) of the children whose grade was reported had completed only the first or second grade or had not completed any grade; only 14 children were in grades above the sixth, and none was in high school, although 169 children were 14 or 15 years of age and should normally have reached the seventh or a higher grade. Of 571 children 8 to 15 years of age who reported their grade in school 486, or 85 per cent, were below the grades which they should have reached according to the commonly accepted standard of progress; [15] over one-half of the retarded were three or more years below the grades considered normal for their ages. (Table 11.) Among colored children working on truck farms in Maryland, both in Anne Arundel County near Baltimore and in the peninsula counties, where the Children's Bureau has made studies of farm work and school attendance, about 71 per cent were found to be retarded.[16]

The chief cause of the slow progress in school of so large a proportion of the children appears to be the general indifference in regard to their schooling, as a result of which the children enter school late and attend irregularly. While the proportion of all the children who were retarded was very large, the proportion retarded among those

[15] The standard adopted by the U. S. Bureau of Education and other authorities classifies as retarded, children entering the first grade at 8 years of age or over, the second grade at 9 years of age or over, and so on.

[16] Child Labor on Maryland Truck Farms. U. S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 123, pp. 20 and 49. Washington, 1923.

who had entered late and among those who had the most unsatisfactory records of attendance was even larger. To maintain normal standing, a child not only must complete a grade each year but must have entered school before he was 8 years of age. One hundred and nineteen of the 571 children had not entered school until they were 8 years of age or over; of these, 114, or 95.8 per cent, were retarded, and all would have been retarded if 5 had not made more than average progress after entering school. The influence of low percentages of attendance upon school progress is indicated by the fact that of the 102 children who had attended school less than half the term 98 were retarded.

TABLE 11.—*Retardation of children who worked on truck farms, by percentage of attendance during school year preceding study.*

Per cent of attendance.	Working children between 8 and 16 years of age.								
	Total.	Retarded.							
		Total.		1 year.		2 years.		3 years.	
		Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent
Total	[1] 571	486	85.1	119	20.8	109	19.1	258	45.2
Under 50 per cent	102	98	96.1	14	13.7	17	16.7	67	65.7
50 per cent, under 80	143	129	90.2	24	16.8	29	20.3	76	53.1
80 per cent, under 100	204	146	71.6	53	26.0	42	20.6	51	25.0
100 per cent	2	1	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Not reported	120	112	93.3	27	22.5	21	17.5	64	53.3

[1] Excludes children who did not attend school during year preceding study or for whom either age as of September following the completion of grade or grade completed was not reported.

WORK OF MOTHERS.

CONDITIONS OF WORK.

Because of the close bearing that a mother's activities have upon the welfare of her children, the survey included a brief inquiry into the work of mothers. In 491 (that is, all except 11) of the families included in the study a mother, a stepmother, or a foster mother was present. It is significant of the economic condition of these families (see p. 6) that 90 per cent of the mothers were gainfully employed. Only 50 of the 491 were free to give all their time to the care of their households and their children. Three hundred and seventy of the women worked on truck farms, including 166 who were also employed in other occupations. Most of those who did other work than farming (179 out of 234) went out at day work, usually as laundresses, or did laundry work at home.

Women probably worked on the farms more uniformly throughout the year than children did, though they were not employed for plowing or harrowing, as boys were. Women in farm laborers' families living on their employers' farms and those who came out by the day from neighboring villages did a greater variety of work than those who lived on their own or rented farms or came from the city to work, as Table 12, showing the more important kinds of field work reported by the women, indicates. City women and seasonal workers who lived on the farms for only a short time were employed principally in connection with harvesting.

Although the majority of the 370 women who worked on the truck farms had spent less than eight hours in the fields on their last working day, field work in addition to household duties resulted in long hours of work. Moreover, for those who lived in rural districts the care of pigs and chickens and other chores and, for those who did not live on farms, the trips to and from the fields made a long working day.

TABLE 12.—*Kinds of field work performed by mothers who worked on truck farms, by work status of family.*

Kind of field work.	Working mothers in families of specified work status.						
	Total.	Owners and tenants.	Laborers resident on farms.	Other laborers.			
				Total.	Living on farms temporarily.	Living in villages.	Living in city.
Total	370	20	68	282	32	208	42
Planting	26	4	4	18	.....	18	.....
Transplanting	53	6	13	34	.....	34	.....
Hoeing	73	9	20	44	2	41	1
Weeding	27	5	12	10	1	9	.....
Spooning kale or spinach	103	8	40	55	2	52	1
Picking strawberries	312	15	48	249	32	178	39
Picking beans	248	16	41	191	18	150	23
Picking peas	115	10	34	71	5	64	2
Picking tomatoes	16	1	2	13	.....	13	.....
Picking cucumbers	31	5	11	15	2	13	.....
Pulling beets	46	5	11	30	2	28	.....
Pulling radishes	117	10	21	86	2	81	3
Gathering potatoes	192	16	55	121	7	100	14
Gathering sweet potatoes	20	4	3	13	.....	13	.....
Cutting kale or spinach	131	11	45	75	5	70	.....
Harvesting all other truck crops	23	4	5	14	.....	14	.....
All other field work	58	7	14	37	4	33	.....

TABLE 13.—*Hours of field work on typical day*[1] *of mothers who worked on truck farms, by total hours of work.*

Total hours of work on typical day.[1]	Mothers who worked specified field hours on typical day.[1]									
	Total.	Less than 4 hours.	4 hours, less than 6.	6 hours, less than 8.	8 hours, less than 9.	9 hours, less than 10.	10 hours, less than 11.	11 hours, less than 12.	12 hours and over.	Not reported.
Total	370	44	109	106	39	28	18	3	2	21
Less than 4 hours	3	3								
4 hours, less than 6	28	12	16							
6 hours, less than 8	63	8	37	18						
8 hours, less than 9	41	2	14	23	2					
9 hours, less than 10	38		6	25	3	4				
10 hours, less than 11	40	1	8	11	15	3	2			
11 hours, less than 12	38	2	6	7	7	10	4	2		
12 hours, less than 13	35	3	8	4	4	5	10		1	
13 hours, less than 14	11	2	1	2	3	1	1	1		
14 hours and over	12	2	1	4	1	2	1		1	
Not reported	61	9	12	12	4	3				21

[1] Hours of work on day preceding visit of agent, or if that day was not typical of the season, on next preceding typical day.

A day's farm work probably brought in a somewhat larger wage than other kinds of work which the women could find to do. Women were paid both by the day and as pieceworkers. Women day laborers, though paid considerably less than male farm laborers, usually earned more than the average pieceworker. The most common wage for day work was $1.50, whereas only 35.7 per cent of those reporting had earned as much as $1.50 at piecework on their last working day. Crops are often poor and the rates are low. On the other hand, it was possible for a few to earn more at piece rates than as day laborers—some of the women had earned more than $3—and in general the pieceworkers' hours were shorter. Thus, with 14 exceptions, the women working at piece rates and reporting their daily earnings had worked less than 10 hours, the ordinary working day for the farm laborer; the majority of them had worked less than 8 hours. Of all the women workers 64.2 per cent had earned less than $1.50 on the day for which earnings were reported, including 61 (34 per cent) who had earned less than $1. (Table 14.)

TABLE 14.—*Daily earnings of mothers who worked on truck farms, by number of hours of field work on typical day.*[1]

Hours of field work on typical day.[1]	Working mothers who reported specified daily earnings.										
	Total.	Less than 25 cents.	25 cents, less than 50 cents.	50 cents, less than 75 cents.	75 cents, less than $1.	$1, less than $1.25.	$1.25, less than $1.50.	$1.50, less than $1.75.	$1.75, less than $2.	$2, less than $2.50.	$2.50 and over.
Total	[2] 179	3	17	23	18	39	15	21	13	19	11
Less than 4 hours	29	1	7	6	3	8	1	2	1	.....	.....
4 hours, less than 5	26	2	5	8	1	6	.....	2	.....	.....	2
5 hours, less than 6	27	.....	1	5	4	2	2	4	4	3	2
6 hours, less than 7	30	.....	2	2	4	8	5	2	1	6	.....
7 hours, less than 8	24	.....	1	.....	2	7	1	7	2	3	1
8 hours	12	.....	.....	1	.....	3	3	1	3	1	.....
Over 8 hours, less than 10	17	.....	1	1	2	1	2	.....	1	6	4
10 hours, less than 13	14	.....	.....	.....	2	4	1	3	1	.....	2

[1] Hours of field work on day preceding visit of agent, or if that day was not typical of the season, on next preceding typical day.
[2] Excludes 191 mothers for whom no report of daily earnings was secured.

EFFECT OF MOTHERS' WORK ON THE WELFARE OF THE CHILDREN.

About one-third of the mothers who did farm work (130 of the 370) had children under 6 years of age. Thirty-four of these women brought their babies to the fields, placing them in any spot at the edge of the fields where they could be watched by children or adults near at hand. The majority, however (95 out of 130), left their young children at home, most of them to be cared for by boys or girls only slightly older. Some of the younger children included in the study as working children were brought to the fields and put to work because, as has been said, that was the easiest way to watch them.

Lack of time and fatigue in the case of mothers who were away from home working in the fields all day were no doubt factors, along with poverty and ignorance, in causing irregular and unsuitable meals. Many of the families "skipped" a meal, usually in the middle of the day. Almost one-fourth of them had had fewer than three meals on the day previous to the agent's interview, including four families that had had but one meal, eaten in the afternoon at the close of the day's work. One family consisting of the mother, a girl of 15 years, and a boy of 12, had picked strawberries from 6

a. m. till 3 p. m. "We just can't seem to get up early enough to get breakfast," said the mother, who went on to explain that they worked straight through the day with "nothing to eat but snuff." On Sunday, however, they had bread and butter and eggs for breakfast.

Although many of the families lived on farms, few had milk, butter, fresh fruits, and vegetables in their dietaries. (Table 15.) The families that were interviewed were questioned concerning their use of milk and were asked also to state what foods they had had for each of the meals on the day preceding the interview, or, if that day's meals were considered not typical of the usual diet, on the last day on which their food had been typical of what the families were accustomed to having. Of the 402 families reporting on the use of milk, 304 (75.6 per cent) were not accustomed to having it daily—109 (83.8 per cent) of the 130 families living on farms, including those of farm owners, tenants, and resident and seasonal farm laborers, and 195 (71.7 per cent) of the 272 living in rural settlements or in Norfolk. Only 11 families had as much as 1 pint of milk per person a day. In spite of the fact that the families were interviewed in the height of the season for fresh vegetables, 152 families (31 per cent of those reporting) had eaten no green vegetables on the preceding day; 445 (90.8 per cent) had had no fruit; and 234 (47 per cent) had had no butter.

Cows were scarce in the vicinity of Norfolk—the land was so valuable for raising truck, it was said, that few farmers were willing to give space to raising feed or pasturing cows—and milk was expensive. The lack of fruit in the diet may also be explained by the expense. The fact, however, that most families could have had green vegetables from the farms on which they worked, whereas almost one-third of them reported eating none, indicates that ignorance of the value of certain food elements as well as expense was the cause of inadequate diet. Taste rather than a recognition of what belongs in a well-balanced diet determined whether or not vegetables and, no doubt, other kinds of food were eaten. Some of the workers said they did not like vegetables, others that they got tired of them, especially when they had to pick them all day long.

TABLE 15.—*Daily dietaries of families with working children, according to amount of milk per person.*

Presence of fruit and vegetables[1] in dietary and amount of milk per person.	Families with working children under 16 years of age.					
	Total.	Having dietaries containing—				Not reporting on presence of butter or protein,[2] or both.
		Both butter and protein.[2]	Butter but not protein.[2]	Protein[2] but no butter.	Neither butter nor protein.[2]	
Total families	502	236	27	201	33	5
Having 1 pint milk per person	11	10	.....	1	.....	.....
Both vegetables and fruit present	1	1	.....	.....	.....	.....
Vegetables present, but no fruit	6	5	.....	1	.....	.....
Neither vegetables nor fruit present	3	3	.....	.....	.....	.....
Fruit present, but no vegetables	1	1	.....	.....	.....	.....
Having less than 1 pint milk per person	69	39	7	23	.....	.....
Both vegetables and fruit present	5	4	1	.....	.....	.....
Vegetables present, but no fruit	44	24	4	16	.....	.....
Neither vegetables nor fruit present	17	9	1	7	.....	.....
Fruit present, but no vegetables	2	1	1	.....	.....	.....
Presence of one or both not reported	1	1	.....	.....	.....	.....
No milk	304	130	16	126	30	2
Both vegetables and fruit present	16	9	.....	7	.....	.....
Vegetables present, but no fruit	197	79	14	79	23	2
Neither vegetables nor fruit present	76	36	1	35	4	.....
Fruit present, but no vegetables	8	2	.....	4	2	.....
Presence of one or both not reported	7	4	1	1	1	.....
Condensed milk only	18	12	.....	5	1	.....
Not reported	100	45	4	46	2	3

[1] Excluding potatoes and dry beans.
[2] Including meat (except lean and salt fat pork), fish, fowl, cheese, and eggs.

CONCLUSION.

Practically all the children working on truck farms in the vicinity of Norfolk are colored, most of them village or city children who come to the truck farms for harvest work, going home each night. As a rule, this group of child workers are employed for only a few weeks, usually to pick strawberries, beans, peas, or gather potatoes, and the majority work 8 or fewer hours a day. Some of the workers, however, are on home farms or farms where their fathers are employed as laborers. Most of these work regularly for several months at a variety of farm operations—plowing, harrowing, cultivating, hoeing, planting and transplanting, thinning, etc.—and a few are employed the year round. General farm workers usually have a longer working day than those who only pick the crops.

Although some of the children employed on the farms are old enough to spend a reasonable number of hours a day at work not too physically exacting, a large proportion are very young and some work excessive hours. Two hundred and thirty-five children (one-fourth of those included in the study) were under 10 years of age, and 454 (one-half) were under 12. One hundred and fifty-six (one-sixth of those included in the study), of whom 109 were under 14

years of age, had worked more than 8 hours a day; and 76, of whom 57 were under 10 years, had worked from 10 to 14 hours. Even picking, one of the simplest kinds of work done by the children, means crawling along on the ground or stooping over, under the hot sun or, as in cutting kale or spinach, exposed to the cold and dampness of winter, and when prolonged for these hours becomes laborious.

The State child labor law, which forbids the employment of children under 14 in practically every other occupation, places no restrictions upon the work of children of any age on farms. Some legal regulation fixing a minimum age and maximum hours is necessary to protect children who are put to work on the truck farms at too early an age and who are required to work longer hours than is generally deemed advisable for the immature.

Fatherless families actually in need of the children's earnings should receive assistance under the State mothers' pension act, so that the temptation to employ the children would be reduced. Less than two-thirds of the families in the study were supported by fathers, and more than one-fifth were supported by mothers, most of whom were in domestic service; the children in the remaining families were dependent for support upon grandparents—often only the grandmother—older brothers, aunts or uncles, or other relatives or friends who, though often very poor themselves, had adopted the children or taken them in when their parents had died or had deserted them.

The children working on the truck farms in the Norfolk district have been much handicapped educationally. They were found to be considerably more retarded in school than any other group of farm workers studied by the bureau, including colored children working on Maryland truck farms. A large proportion of those included in the study had attended school less than half the school term, and many had been absent from school for farm work for at least one month during the year preceding the inquiry. Since the study was made the enforcement of the compulsory school attendance law has been strengthened by amendments, but any city or county may still exempt itself from all the provisions of the law. Unless the school-attendance law is strictly enforced in the Norfolk district the child workers on the truck farms have little chance of enjoying advantages superior to those of their parents, a large proportion of whom are illiterate and thus seriously handicapped socially and industrially. The law should be so changed that counties could not exempt themselves from its provisions. A more centralized form of school government, giving more power to the county and less to the districts, would also seem to be desirable in order to lessen the pressure of purely local interests in the matter of school terms and the enforcement of school attendance.

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